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Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

Letter dated 2 August 2010 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with instructions received from the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 11 June 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina addressed to you, transmitting in an annex a copy of a press release issued by the Argentine Republic on 10 June 2010.

The Government of the United Kingdom has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, and their surrounding maritime areas.

The principle of self-determination, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, underlies our position on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. There can be no negotiation on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless and until such time as the Falkland Islanders so wish. They have made clear that they wish to remain British.

The Government of the United Kingdom would, however, like to correct some factual inaccuracies in the press release from the Government of Argentina. It claims the establishment by decree on 10 June 1829 of an Argentine Political and Military Command for the Falkland Islands and the creation of an appropriate institutional framework for the subsequent colonization undertaken by Luis Vernet. However, the Government of the United Kingdom protested against the 10 June 1829 Argentine Decree on 19 November 1829. In addition, Luis Vernet had applied for and been granted a Falkland Islands land grant at the British Consulate in Buenos Aires on 30 January 1828.

The Government of the United Kingdom is clear that none of the civilians living on the Falkland Islands were expelled from the Falkland Islands on 3 January 1833. Some chose to leave, but the majority remained. Historical evidence supports this. The only individuals who were expelled were the members of the Argentine

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military garrison who had been sent to the islands three months earlier to impose Argentine sovereignty on the civilian population.

The Government of Argentina has not continuously protested against United Kingdom sovereignty over the Falkland Islands since 1833. In 1850 the United Kingdom and Argentina signed the Convention of Settlement, which settled "the existing differences" between Argentina and the United Kingdom and a "perfect friendship" was restored. Argentina made no formal diplomatic protests over the Falkland Islands for 38 years after the 1850 Convention of Settlement. In the 90 years between 1850 and 1940 Argentina only made one formal diplomatic protest over the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands: that made by the Argentine Foreign Minister, Norberto Quirno Costa, in 1888.

The Government of the United Kingdom has encouraged the Government of the Falkland Islands to develop its own economy and future. It is the wish of the Falkland Islands Government to proceed with its policy of hydrocarbons exploration in Falkland Islands waters and it is part of the legitimate business of that Government carried out in accordance with local and international law, and is compatible with relevant General Assembly resolutions.

The Government of the United Kingdom remains open to discussions with the Government of Argentina on a whole range of issues relating to cooperation in the South Atlantic. Last year the Governments of the United Kingdom, Argentina and the Falkland Islands worked to organize two visits of the next of kin of the Argentine fallen. The visits to the Falkland Islands were very successful and were an example of good cooperation.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 23.

(*Signed*) Philip **Parham**
Chargé d'affaires